

REMARKS

The present remarks are responsive to the Examiner's Office Action dated March 27, 2007. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowability for Claims 20, 44, 45 and 50-53 if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1, 4-7, 11-12, 14, 16-21 and 42-43, 45, and 50-101 are pending in the present application, with Claims 9, 44 and 46-49 being canceled herein, Claims 1 and 45 being amended and new Claims 55-101 added. Reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendment and following comments is respectfully requested.

Amended Specification

To expedite the issuance of a patent, Applicants have amended paragraph [0014] to remove the amendments made in paragraph [0014] in the Response to Office Action dated December 12, 2006. Applicants do not acquiesce to the Examiner's characterization of the prior amendments as new matter and believe that the amendments are fully supported by the original filing. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue the same or similar amendments in a continuation application.

Amended and New Claims

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowability for Claims 20, 44, 45 and 50-53 if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In reliance upon the Examiner's indication of allowability of Claim 44, Applicants have amended Claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable Claim 44. Claims 9 and 44 have been canceled. Claim 45 has been amended to change its dependency from canceled Claim 44 to amended Claim 1. No new matter has been added. Dependent Claims 4-7, 11-12, 14, 16-21, 42-43, 45 and 50-54 are patentable for at least the same reasons that Claim 1 is patentable, and are also patentable for the unique combination of subject matter that each claim recites.

In reliance upon the Examiner's indication of allowability of Claim 20, Applicants have added new Claims 55-76. Claim 55 reflects the incorporation of the allowable subject matter in Claim 20 and intervening Claim 19 into base Claim 1. No new matter has been added. Claims

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56-76 reflect the dependent subject matter of prior base Claim 1. Claims 56-76 are patentable for at least the same reasons that Claim 55 is patentable, and are also patentable for the unique combination of subject matter that each claim recites.

In reliance upon the Examiner's indication of allowability of Claim 50, Applicants have added new Claims 77-101. Claim 77 reflects the allowable subject matter of Claim 50 along with base Claim 1. No new matter has been added. Claims 78-101 reflect the dependent subject matter of prior base Claim 1. Claims 78-101 are patentable for at least the same reasons that Claim 77 is patentable, and are also patentable for the unique combination of subject matter that each claim recites.

Response to the Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner rejected Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by certain references. Applicants disagree with the propriety of the outstanding rejections. However, as Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claim 44, the Applicants have no occasion to comment on the Examiner's rejection.

Response to the Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 4-7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16-18, 21 and 54 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over certain combinations of references. Applicants disagree with the propriety of the outstanding rejections. However, as Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claim 44, the Applicants have no occasion to comment on the Examiner's rejections.

Conclusions

Claims 1, 4-7, 11-12, 14, 16-21, 42-43, 45, 50-54 and 55-101 remain pending for consideration. Based on the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that each of the pending claims is currently in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request a notice of allowance. Applicants have endeavored to respond to each of the issues raised by the Examiner. However, if there remain any unresolved issues that could be resolved

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via a telephone conference, the Applicants invite the Examiner to initiate the same with Applicants' representative at the telephone number shown below.

The Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as previously pending are patentably distinguished over the cited references or any combination thereof. The above-referenced claims, however, have been amended without altering their scope in order to clarify the features of the Applicants' inventions and to expedite the issuance of a patent. These claim amendments are not made for patentability purposes, and it is believed that the claims would satisfy the statutory requirements for patentability without the entry of such amendments. Applicants reserve the right to pursue claims of the same or broader scope in a continuation application and respectively submit that the pending claims are now in a condition for allowance.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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